Adaptation of Motif and Design Pattern: An Existent Tool for Textile Fabric Evaluation

By

Maria Akuejeozi Mbelu
Department Of Fine and Applied Art
Faculty of Humanities
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education
Rumuolumeni, Rivers State

Chinedu C. Chukueggu
Department Of Fine and Applied Art
Faculty of Humanities
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education
Rumuolumeni, Rivers State
&
Sotonye Allen Orubu
Department Of Fine and Applied Art
Faculty of Humanities
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education
Rumuolumeni, Rivers State

Abstract

Each time art is practiced, new understanding is developed. Adaptation of motif and design pattern is fundamental to a good textile plan and equally an effective tool for textile fabric evaluation and textile finishing sustainability. Thus, the right choice of motif and design pattern is fundamental to good textile evaluation. Design, a concept of putting the art element together to a pleasing artistic statement requires skill in order to bring to limelight new ideas and pattern for a sustainable textile design. A better understanding of the material enhances the symbiosis between the design and fabric. The development of textile industries has been one of the greatest influences of modern civilization. In Nigeria, textile motif and design patterns are incredibly powerful visual indicator of brand types and so often define aspects of brand identity. Not much has been explored so far in developing a skill of proper understanding and

utilization on adaptation of motif and designed pattern using elements and principles of design. Previous studies have not conceptualized this and the functions of principles of design and practices in the designing of textile fabric and apparel. The aim of this study is therefore to uncover the great ingenuity and creativity through the use of different motifs and design pattern which will be x-rayed through the use of element and principles of design. In order to appreciate the work of art the knowledge of the specific art skills for each medium used is required. The study will be geared toward x – raying the endless possibilities of exploring different motif and design pattern. Hence show cases how the right choice of motif and design pattern is fundamental to a good textile plan and equally an effective tool for textile fabric evaluation and textile finishing sustainability.

Keywords: Design, adaptation, textile, motif, pattern, principles

Introduction

In order to appreciate the work of art, the knowledge of the specific art skills for each medium used is required .Adaptation of motif in fabric is one of the effective tools for sustainability and market ability of Nigeria textile fabric which is one of the major pivots where the social political and development economy revolves. (Fiofori, 2009),states that, *the economic prospects of textile production are bright and attractive to people who want to be self-reliant*. Motif is a decorative object used to design a fabric. Its relationship with fabric is in the heart of the creative process, and each time art is practiced, new understanding is developed. In Nigeria, motif and design patterns are incredibly powerful visual indicator of brand types and so often define aspects of brand identity. In this work, careful study on adaptation of motif both from primary and secondary source will be analyzed through exploration of various methods of designing. Nigeria is one of the countries that experienced external influence from western world. Western textile came with different design pattern and motif together with culture, fashion, dressing accessories, religion and communication.(Chukueggu,1998), states that, *the ancestors of the contemporary textile tradition in Nigeria can be traced to various indigenous weaving and dyeing traditions. However, the influence of the Dutch textile merchants that transcend the contemporary textile culture cannot be over emphasized.* But today the story is different due to the ingenuity developed in the adaptation of

design pattern and motif used in Nigeria textiles which is the bases for selecting a fabric by consumers. Throughout history, people have clothed themselves with designed fabrics and man's ingenuity in creating designs and patterns using different motifs have become more sophisticated over time.

The development of textile industries has been one of the greatest factors of civilization in Nigeria. (Wogu, 2009) opines that, *fashion trends in textile design in cultures are unstable. The rate of change or discard of trends are usually high and this is expected when considered alongside vagaries of taste and social consciousness.* Textile Prints are designs and patterns that bring out the effects and beauty of the figure (motif) on a fabric. Nature and role of Nigeria textile prints play a great part as an effective tool for textile fabric evaluation in Nigeria. A print makes the motif to look larger than a plain fabric on the same colour. The modern women of Nigeria owe much debt to primitive women until machinery was invented, they held textile industry design in their hands through the use of manual looms and local dyes. (Faerm, 2010) states that, *by learning something of history of fashion design and looking at those exponents who have left an indelible mark, you will acquire a context for the shifts involved in the world of fashion and begin to understand the evolution and revolutions that have occurred*. Textile industries in Nigeria had passed their primitive stages, though each society still maintains the cultural background of its ancestors. The most common beauty of design and skillful handling are evident from samples preserved in the museums of textiles and crafts. Functionality of textile design, pattern and motif is seen in wears, cover, dress, apparels and decorative fabrics. Nigeria textile is mostly based on natural fiber with cotton fiber being the most frequently used, more accessible and affordable. (Krydz and Emeka, 2005) states that, *traditional Igbo women are experts in planting collecting and preparing cotton, as well as in processing vegetable dyes such as indigo for textile production. These gifted artists continually regenerate and revitalize traditional Igbo fashion by absorbing and incorporating new ideas and mastering materials and techniques.* This cotton fiber is cultivated in Nigeria and also imported especially when high quality fabric is required. In the primitive days cotton fiber was usually processed manually by Nigerian women but now cotton production passes through mechanical processes. The fundamental raw materials used in textile production are fibers either from natural or manmade sources. In Nigeria we also have leather which comes from animal skin and is mostly found in the Northern part of the

country and is normally used to make bags, shoes, caps, and even dress for most royal occasions. Significance of textile design and motif in Nigerian fabrics can be seen in dresses and apparels. Apparel is a personal attire, clothes worn on formal occasions, as well as fine and beautiful clothing sold in shops.

Motif and Design Patterns an Instrument of Representation and Expressions

Adaptations of motif and design pattern in Nigerian fabric are extremely attuned to historical, cultural, societal and political contexts. This is a great tool for evaluation of textile fabrics in Nigeria and a great contributor to social-political economy of Nigerian society. (Chukueggu, Egware and Cyril 2009) states that, clothing *provides considerable information about the wearer, including individual personality, economic standing and even the nature of event attended by the wearer.*Alagoa, Derefaka, Okorobia (2009), noted the significance of textile design in Nigeria and their uses as dress are numerous. They are principal way of expressing peoples cultural- identity, among others. This is so because what we wear says a lot more about us than we may imagine. It is for this reason that historians, in particular, show great interest in the study of textiles, their design and dress styles. Different names are given to various fabrics according to motif and design pattern used on the fabric or according to repeat pattern. Expression and representation of peoples identity and customers desire are also showcased in designing process, as illustrated by (Onobrakpaya 2009), when he asserts that *The study of textile, their design and motif easily reveal a peoples history' for instance, the use of drawn head of a lion (isiagu in Igbo language) in the Niger Delta in Nigeria have historical background.* The red and white colours, which functions as a design pattern and motif has religious significance and are dominant in Urhobo in Delta State in Nigeria, and are made up of element of design - line, shape,



Plate 1

form, texture and colour. All these have background connotations from culture through expressionism and representation.

Adaptation of Motif in Nigeria Fabric

Adaptation of motif in Nigeria fabric is one of the effective tools for sustain ability and marketability of Nigeria textiles fabric. It is one of the major pivots where the economic, political and social development in Nigeria economy revolves.

Motif is a decorative object used to design a fabric. Motif relationship with fabric is the heart of the creative process. The right choice of motif is fundamental to good design and is instrumental to its success. (Karan 2004), opines, that the better understanding of the material the more effective is the symbiosis between the design and fabric. Motifs is a decorative object use to design a fabric. Motifs is usually in natural, man-made, abstract or traditional. Motif relationship with fabric is at the heart of the creative process. There are four types of motif which includes plant, floral, traditional, geometrical, and abstract motif. Motif in art is a recurring fragment, theme or pattern that appears in work of art. Ankara motif goes with cultural, symbolic undertone and the fashion invoke. A motif is a recurring image, idea, symbol or concept throughout a text, and symbol is an object that represents something it is not, it explains a theme which is the central idea or message. Most indigenous Nigerian fabrics are marked superior according to name given by designer or the wholesaler or field researcher. They visit stores to give designers unlimited information about fabric usage, trends, consumer's behaviour and merchandising, Also consider what is selling most and list with price tag before designing the next.



Plate 2

Nigerian fabric mostly *ankara* and *abada* motifs are adapted from various research. This can either be from primary or secondary research. Primary research is when objects (motif) is collected and synthesized by the designer. It might be from observing artworks, still life objects like furniture designs, images of plants, animals and natural scenes like landscape, historical and traditional objects, with detailed knowledge of the objects. Secondary research is information that has been accumulated and analyzed for the designer. It is already made information which may be from a new trend forecast provided by a service or already known used object that has been used by another designer.

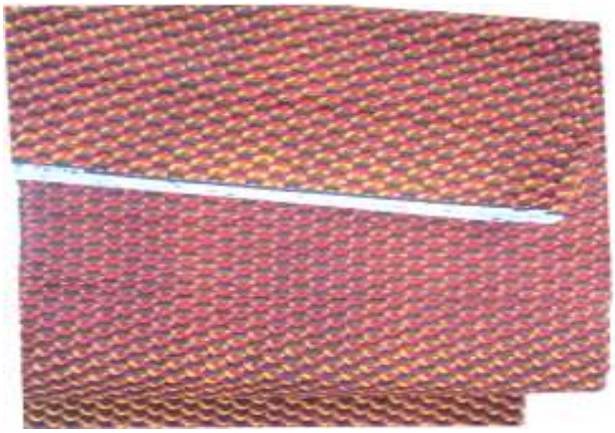


Plate 3

In plate 3, the motif on the fabric is adopted from the scaly skin of fish, the fabric is known as *ikpelikpeazu* (Igbo language). This fabric because of its name tag

derived from local vernacular has made waves in Nigerian textile market and has remained popular for over fifty years. It still remains a fabric of choice for Nigerian women till date.



Plate 4



Plate 5

In plate 5 the motif used here is tagged with the name "heavy rain." The motifs adapted from rainfall and adopted into Nigerian fabric. The design comes in form of lines, so the adaptation of motif in this fabric comes from abstraction of rainfall.

Fashion varies and is very free, so it is important to develop a certain personal style that suits the individual. Nigerian print goes with cultural undertone and the fashion in vogue. This is to say that textiles display the artistry and ingenuity of civilization, the most precious examples of which even help to denote the society. Nigerian textiles which are widely used by all irrespective of cultural, social or economic background go with a name tag that goes hand in hand with the motif and design on the fabric. Karan (2004) observes that *in contemporary life an ever more sophisticated and growing range of fabrics expresses the complex language of fashion*. There are varieties of prints you can find in Nigeria markets and end use is mostly determined by the choice of the user. The names of these fabrics are given by the women or the producers to make it more prominent and equally put it on a higher grade which in turn makes it more costly. The fabrics are graded according to quality, Hallett and Johnston (2004) stated that, *Fabric are also incredibly powerful as a strong visual indicator of a brand, often defining aspects of a brand identity and the fashion designers relationship with fabric is at the heart of the creative process*. The right choice of fabric is fundamental to good design and is instrumental to its success. Likewise the choice for this Nigeria textile print is geared towards good design and quality material.

Nature and role of Nigeria Prints

Textile Prints are designs and patterns that bring out the effects and beauty of the figure (motif) on a fabric. Nature and role of Nigeria textile prints play a great part as an effective tool for textile fabric evaluation in Nigeria. A print makes the motif to look larger than a plain fabric on the same colour. Most common name for these fabrics is known as Ankara, it is a general name given to make in Nigeria fabrics. Adaptation of Motif used for Nigeria prints are usually in natural, manmade, abstract or traditional form.(Brown 2010) opines that, *the future of fashion lies in fabric and the better used of motif determine the demand*.



Plate 6

Nigerian motif on print goes with cultural undertones, the end use and fashion in vogue, and each of the fabric goes with a name tag that gives value to the fabrics. Such name includes:*Kilikili Star (little little star) Mgbolodi (Water leaf), Broken plate, Ikpelikpeazu (scales Fish), Omaba junction, English gold, Onigboagidi, Akigwe (The hand of a King), Heavy rain, Horse Step, Njikoka, One thousand blocks, Opener.*These fabrics are categorized according to quality of production and most of the time each name tag with the same adapted motif has two qualities for different classes of people; these categories are shown in plate 6. Some of these categorized fabrics include:

Super Wax

This is a type of fabric with heavy designed motif and textures in the background. The adapted motifs intermingle with each other beautifully to produce a very good design. It is also characterized by fine veins which make the cloth very attractive. This type of textile fabric is normally made in Holland and imported into Nigeria. Most of the time they copy Nigerian designs and then produce them but Nigerians give them names in accordance with the types of print, motif which is generally known as "Hollandis".

Real Wax

This is characterized by one principle colour which is very dominant, for instance, indigo blue and dark brown. These colours dominate other lighter colours which are applied using wood blocks to show misfit form as a motif. Misfit is when designing object shift purposely from its original position in the fabrics. These

types of fabric are normally lower in standard when compared to super wax, and are purely Nigerian made.

Imitation Wax

Colours used in this type of design are applied directly unto the cloth by means of copper rollers. In this type of design many colours are being used but four colours seem to be the preferred maximum. Cracking or veins are also engraved properly on the roller as a form of design on the background before printing.

Colour as a Motif

Colour plays a very significant role in Nigeria textile evaluation and the socio-economic level depending on end use or on customers demand. This is a pure characteristic of Nigerian fabric which is commonly known as Nigerian veritable wax, and is often made in warm colours. *Colour is a powerful instrument that can be used to convey a mood and a message and artists have always used colour to support and define emotion, and designers do the same*, (Faerm 2010).This can be seen in organizations uniforms and occasion dresses used by Nigerians, harmonious colours are used to construct and detail designs. Adaptation of shapes also can be seen in motif , some of the designers use shapes like geometric, shaped beads to support colour works on textile. Design varies according to designer. One designer might use a fabric that is beaded all over and in many colours and another may use a fabric that is solid black with tiny flowers. Beaded fabrics are usually good on border design with plain colour. Textile fabric is a great avenue for social, economic and political developments in Nigeria.

A textile designer should not just be merely aware of his environment but should be able to transform such environment into aesthetic and decorative language. The approach should not only be conventional but his work should be an excellent reflection of his abstract perception in an individualistic style. To be more precise, in textile designing, the sources of inspiration are not limited to the conventional use of animals, plants and insects as motifs but rather the sources could also be extractions and abstractions from any environmental composition. It becomes imperative that in designing one should not be limited to conventional objects but rather one should try to raise a pleasing design by composing something desirable out of nothing or from existing environment

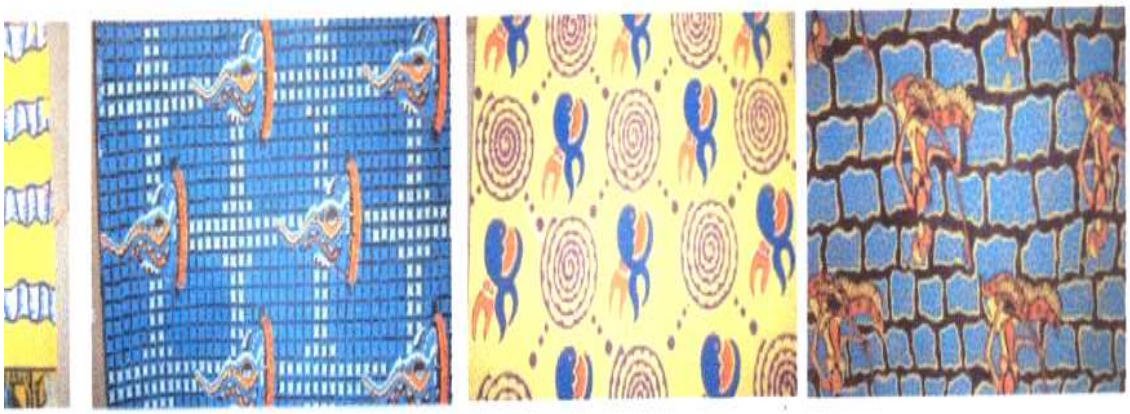


Plate 7

Motif Process and Adaptation

Motif should he used in different scales from look to look.

Motif should be placed in pattern on different areas of the body to move the viewer's eye.

Motif should be used in varied colour application, such as contrast colour. Texture can also be used to convey motif. Solids shapes can also be used as motifs as well as contour line like geometric shape objects, etc. Innovative new ways to use motif is so important in fabric finishing in order, maintaining a rich depth of design. New ideas should also be used on placing motif collection to maintain a rich depth of design.

Design Pattern as an Effective Tool for Fabric Evaluation

Design pattern is an important drive for textile fabric assessment in Nigeria. Pattern is a decorative design used in repetition of motifs on a surface. It is the ordered surface design and also a textural quality such as those found in textiles, tiles, and wallpaper, depending on its scale. Design patterns are patterns mostly used in fabric design and they are called repeat pattern.



Plate 8

It is a method of placing motifs in order of sequence in a way to achieve the desired pattern for specific purpose. It is an arranged order or rule in placing the motif in sequence with a purpose in view. Some of these patterns are repeated in orderly form in order of designs, concepts, or customers wish. Some of these repeat patterns include: simple repeat pattern, half drop repeat pattern, full drop repeat pattern, scatter repeat pattern etc.

Design is a concept of putting the art elements together into a pleasing artistic statement. This means developing a skill in putting the art elements together. These elements of art are line, shape, colour, form, texture and space. All these work together to bring out the design. This is typical of Nigerian textile. There are two major types of designs normally found in Nigeria textile; they are functional and decorative design.(Mbelu 2009) states that, *functional design is determined by the decorative object (motif) used, for what the fabric is meant for. Decorative design is when the design added to the object (Motif) is to enhance the beauty and interest of the end use*. Every design on any textile material is determined by the end use and this is the totality of Nigerian textile. Pattern is the use of elements and principles of design in arranged order or rule in placing the motif in sequence with a purpose in view, Nigerian textile design are mostly in repeat patterns. For effective adaptation of motif, design patterns must be guided by the rules of principles of

design. Some of these principles include, balance, directional forces, contrast unity, emphasis.

Discovering, selecting and working with fabrics offers an exciting tactile experience. Most Nigerian textile designs are directed to what please the society. Such designs could be grouped as dress, furnishing designs, lace, carpet, wall-paper and designs for specific purposes. The major aim of any textile designer is to raise a decorative or aesthetic language in the production of textile goods and such could only be realized through a creative approach which needs highly imaginative creativity and divergence in thought and subject matter,



Plate 9

Another method of adaptation of motif is through the use of lines to form a design. In this method of design, the artist adapts the motif from his creative ability. The drawing of line on the fabrics brings out a design that can be adapted as motif on a fabric. The use of lines to form a design on a fabric is known as *uli design. Uli* in pre modem Nigeria was used to design house using various local dye to draw

lines as a form of motif. There are various types of lines from where motifs can be adapted; these include zigzag, curved, straight, horizontal, thick, thin lines etc.



Plate 10

Conclusion

In conclusion, textile industry is constantly evolving with developments in technology, in an ever-changing global market. In a competitive textile market, adaptation of motifs and design patterns are instrumental to a company's success. For sustain ability of textile fabric, the designer today needs a wide skill and knowledge based on this.

(Faerm 2010) states that *detail oriented form, texture, and scale are essential foundations for design*. Motif adaptation and a confident understanding of fabrics are fundamental to the design process, allowing one to make informed choices rather than arbitrary decisions based upon surface appeal and colour used. (Osia 2003) notes that "the way a fabric is designed and method of design influences the appearance as well as the availability of the fabrics". Nigerian textile designers use motifs and design patterns through creative processes and consumer's desire. (Karan 2004) further observes that *the right choice of motif is fundamental to good*

design and is instrumental to its success. Uses of motif for designing of fabric vary from imaginative shapes to natural and still object to traditional motifs.

In designing, objects are placed in accordance with size and pattern of the fabric in line with elements and principles of design, According to (Mbelu 2010), *pattern is the use of element and principles of design in arranged order or rule in placing the motif in sequence with a purpose in view*.(Faerm 2010) adds that, *by mastering these principles you will develop your creativity and refine your understanding of what makes a successful design. This study will go a long way to reveal the advantages of a good mastery of the application and practice of these principles of design*. Different techniques and methods of applying designs are revealed, including the use of the decorative object known as motif. Colour, affective accents in design, seen on the surface of the fabric, can be purely textural or abstracted with the subject matter, images and forms that relate to human and animal world.

For effective adaptation of motif and design pattern for a sustainable textile fabric, there must be an effective manipulation of motif and design pattern in designing of fabric. This will help the designers to discover new design vision and develop new ideas through process and skill acquisition.

Recommendations

As the textile industries are constantly evolving with developments in technology, in an ever-changing global market. Effective adaptation of motif and design pattern for a sustainable textile fabric is needed, thus there must be an effective manipulation of motif and design pattern in designing of fabric. This will help the designers to discover new design and develop new ideas and vision through process and skill acquisition. The paper recommends that such issues as stated above should be given attention for effective result in the development of textile.

Fashion is a discipline that requires a lot of abilities, skills, extensive knowledge, and assets. Thus a well-rounded education, dedication, and an indestructible willingness are keys to this. In addition, it is very important for a student to be in contact with creative professionals for mentor purposes and there are primary elements one must possess to be a successful designer.

These include;

- Patience, open mindedness, curiosity and experimentalist, passion for fashion, a vision and a strategy.
- A designer must have good basis in art and strong knowledge in contemporary art fashion, culture and history.
- Must be articulate, able to communicate ideas and willingness to work with others.

REFERENCES

Calender (2013), Nigeria Crafts a Reflection of Colour and Creativity; Nigeria Snepco Publication

Chukueggu C.C. and Egware .C (2009). *The origin and use of Blangidi in the Niger Delta* in Alagoa E.J, Dereka A.A, Okorobia A.M (pp5-15) *History and use in the Niger-Delta Nigeria* History Concourse; Onyoma Research publication.

Chukueggu C.C (1998). Contemporary Nigerian Art and its Classification. Delsu Consult Publishers. Port Harcourt.

Faerm .S (2010). *Fashion Design Course*. Barrans Educational series Inc. London

Faerm .S (2010). *Fashion Design Course*. Barrans Educational series Inc. London

Faerm .S (2010). *Fashion Design Course*. Barrans Educational series Inc. London

Hallet C. and Johnston A. (2010) *Fabric for Fashion. A Comprehensive guide to Natural fibers.* Laurence King publishing. London,

IkwumesiC.K and Agbayi.E (2005) .Uli and politics culture.Pendulum Gallery.

Karan.D(2004) The future of fashion lies in fabrics. In Hallet C. and Johnston A *Fabric for Fashion. A Comprehensive guide to Natural fibers;* London; Laurence King publishing.

Karan.D(2004) The future of fashion lies in fabrics. In Hallet C. and Johnston A *Fabric for Fashion. A Comprehensive guide to Natural fibers;* London; Laurence King publishing.

Mbelu M.A (2010), *Cultural and Creative Arts. Fine Art for junior Secondary School. Revised Edition.* Metmay publishers Enugu.

Mbelu M.A (2009), *Introduction to fine and Applied Art;* Revised Edition; Met may publishers Enugu.

OnobrakpeyaB (2009).Textiles and Dress use in Niger Delta. In Alagoa E.J, Derefaka A A, OkorobiaA.M . History Concourse;*: History and use of dress*

in the Niger-Delta Nigeria.(ppxxi-4) Onyoma Research Publication. Port Harcourt.

Osia J .E.D (2003); *Textile Design and Construction.* Nigeria Alcel Concerns

Fiofori T.F (2011) *Benin Coronation Oba Erediauwua.*BeninSunArt. BEP

FioforiT.F (2009).Harmattan Experience: (pp145-165) Art, Life and Textile in Perspective. In Alagoa E.J, Derefaka A A, OkorobiaA.M . History Concourse*;: History and use of dress in the Niger-Delta Nigeria*.(ppxxi-4) Onyoma Research Publication. Port Harcourt.

WoguE.(2009). *Cultural Appreciations and Hybrids. The adaptation of the Indian madras in Isiokpokwerre.(pp69-92* in History Concourse . Textiles Dress, History and use in the Niger Delta Nigeria.